



Who Tests What? Prospective ELT Teachers' Conceptions and Suggestions on the New Distribution of the Subjects and Topics in the Subject Knowledge Test

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ABSTRACT

Starting from its first implementation, Subject Knowledge Test (henceforward SKT) has been investigated in various subject fields due to the emerging questions about its content and applicability in selecting prospective teachers. With the contribution of 355 participants including senior students and the graduates from different ELT undergraduate programs of the universities throughout Turkey, this study aimed to investigate the conceptions and suggestions of prospective ELT teachers on the new distribution of the subjects and topics in SKT in 2019. The data were collected by conducting an online survey and semi-structured interviews held with ten ELT prospective teachers. The study revealed that the new distribution of the subjects and topics in SKT was not satisfactory and relevant to select ELT prospective teachers who are competent and qualified in their fields due to substantial obliqueness in its content and administration process.

Keywords: Prospective EFL teachers, Subject Knowledge Test, conceptions, suggestions.

Kim Ne Test Ediyor? İngilizce Öğretmen Adaylarının Öğretmenlik Alan Bilgisi Testindeki Konu ve Başlıkların Yeni Dağılımı Üzerine Görüş ve Önerileri

Öz

İlk uygulanmasından itibaren Öğretmenlik Alan Bilgisi Testi (ÖABT), öğretmen adaylarının seçilmesinde içeriği ve uygulanabilirliği bakımından farklı öğretmenlik alanlarında araştırılmıştır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye genelindeki üniversitelerin farklı ELT lisans programlarına devam eden 355 son sınıf öğrencisi ve mezun öğrencinin 2019 yılında uygulanan, İngilizce Öğretmenlik Alan Bilgisi Testi İngilizce (İÖABT) alan sınavında yer alan konu ve başlıkların yeni dağılımı üzerine görüş ve önerilerin yansıtmayı amaçlamıştır. Araştırmanın verileri çevrimiçi anket ve 10 İngilizce öğretmen adayı ile uygulanan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Çalışma, İÖABT alan sınavında yer alan konu ve başlıkların yeni dağılımının içeriğinden ve uygulanış sürecinden kaynaklanan çarpıklıklardan dolayı alanlarında yetkin ve nitelikli İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının seçiminde tatmin edici ve amacına uygun olmadığı sonucunu ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: İngilizce Öğretmen Adayları, Öğretmenlik Alan Bilgisi Testi, Görüşler, Öneriler.

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1 | INTRODUCTION

Teaching profession necessitates qualified teachers who will prosecute and adapt themselves to the recent developments in education. Important political and educational applications have been put into action to educate and recruit qualified teachers throughout the world (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Among these applications, selecting and recruiting prospective teachers is a topical concern. Darling-Hammond and Youngs (2002) point that recruiting effective prospective teachers is directly related to successful student achievement. In a similar vein, it is a way of making future investment for future teacher effectiveness in that educational context (Klassen & Kim, 2018).

Most countries in the world have difficulties in the selection and recruitment procedure of prospective teachers (Chevalier et al., 2005). This case is also valid in Turkish education system. In the last few decades, there has been an increase in the number of the education faculties throughout the country and accordingly in the number of the university students graduating from these faculties (Tekneci, 2016). Although inductions are provided by MoNE for vacant positions each year, the number of the prospective teachers applying for these positions is higher than those vacant positions. Hence, this case called for an examination to select the qualified prospective teachers that would perform the intended goals and objectives of MoNE (Eraslan, 2014).

Examination of Civil Servants in 1999 was the first examination that was held for the recruitment process of all types of professional posts in general. In 2001, this examination was held under the name of Central Elimination Exam for Public Positions. However, in 2002, these two examinations were mediatized under the name of Professional Posts in Public Organizations (henceforward CEEPP). After 2013, SKT was included into CEEPP as a part of this selection process of prospective teachers. Karaer¹ et al. (2018) stressed the role of the studies that reflect the conceptions and opinions of prospective teachers was one of the significant factors leading stakeholders to implement SKT for the following years.

In the recent literature, there are studies which reflect the views and suggestions of prospective teachers about SKT from different subject fields. These studies were mainly centred upon whether SKT should be implemented or not to choose the qualified teachers in their subject fields (Halmatov & Kızıltaş, 2019; Turan & Zengin, 2017; Çelik, 2016; Reçepoğlu, et al., 2016; Şahin & Demir, 2016; Erdem & Soylu, 2013). However, no previous study has been implemented to reflect the conceptions and suggestions of ELT prospective teachers with this respect and on the new distribution of the topics and subjects in the latest SKT.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

Subject knowledge comprises the knowledge of the concepts and phenomena in the field; on the other hand, pedagogical field knowledge includes formulating and demonstrating these concepts and phenomena in a comprehensible way to the others (Shulman, 1987). Thus, selecting and recruiting the teachers who will transfer their subject knowledge and field knowledge is very crucial for the education policies of nations. Throughout the world different teacher selection and recruitment procedures are carried out to induct qualified teachers (Blank et al., 2004). Generally, this procedure includes two phases in most educational context; first, the identification of vacant positions based on geographical areas or subject areas, and second providing financial opportunities for the education and induction (See & Gorard, 2019). In their study, Blömeke et al., (2008) discuss a recruitment model based on two phases; focus on professional competence and the factors that might affect this professional competence. Incorporating prospective teachers to postgraduate courses as a pre-requisite for the admission to in-service teacher positions is another way for the recruitment (Ballantyne et al., 2002). These courses are regarded as very significant factors and contributory elements in this admission process (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

When considered this system in Turkey, it might be divided into two phases; (1) *teacher selection and recruitment without an examination system* and (2) *teacher selection and recruitment based on an examination system*. In the first system, various institutions, or schools, such as Primary Teacher Schools, Country Teacher

Schools, Trainer Courses, Country Institutions, Teacher High Schools, Education Institutions, Education Schools and Education Faculties were responsible for teacher education (Öztürk, 1999). These institutions and schools were in charge until 1973; however, they were closed after the promulgation of Basic Law of National Education with the number of 1739 (MoNE, 1973). Although an examination named Teacher Proficiency Examination was implemented between the years 1985-1991, all the prospective teachers were inducted due to myriad deficiencies in public posts between those years. During this continuum until 1999, no examination system was put into action for the selection and recruitment of prospective teachers. These implementations were lasted when all teacher education institutions were gathered under the umbrella of education faculties until 1993. Memduhoğlu and Kayan (2017) argue that these continuous changes in teacher education policies might result from the efforts of keeping up pace with the developing educational contexts throughout the world, disposing the negative effects of being a newly established country and coping with the difficulty of teacher training.

The second system started under the name of Examination of Civil Servants which was held by Assessment, Selection, and Placement Centre (henceforward ASPC) with the coordination of State Planning Organization (henceforward SPO) in 1999. In 2001, this examination was redefined as Central Elimination Exam for Public Positions (henceforward CEEPP). However, all the regulations released for these two examinations were repealed after one year, and ASPC became responsible for the selection of the candidates for all the vacant positions in the public institutions including prospective teachers' selection. Within this continuum, ASPC started to administer CEEPP which is held in two sessions: morning session and afternoon session. The content of CEEPP comprises the topics of general knowledge and ability, general culture and educational sciences. In the morning session, general knowledge and ability and general culture test with 120 questions (comprising 60 % of the total examination) and in the afternoon session, educational sciences test with 120 questions (comprising 40 % of the total examination) are conducted to the exam takers. In addition to these sessions, MoNE, in line with its objectives and goals for a better teacher selection process, released a regulation that edited SKT consisting of Subject Knowledge and Subject Teaching tests for 15 teaching fields (MoNE, 2013).

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE OLD AND NEW DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOPICS IN SKT FOR ELT PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

The topics and subjects in SKTs of ELT and Primary School Teaching were changed and reorganized according to a regulation released by ASPC (ASPC, 2018). As regards to this regulation, ASPC increased the number of the questions in subject knowledge test to 45 and subject teaching questions to 35. However, in the rest of the 13 teaching areas there were 60 subject knowledge questions and 15 subject teaching questions.

Table 1. The Percentages and Numbers of the Questions in SKT (2013 and 2018-2019)

Topics and Subjects	Total Percentage		Approximate Percentage		Number of the Questions	
	2013 and 2018	2019	2013 and 2018	2019	2013 and 2018	2019
1-Subject Knowledge Test	80 %	60 %			40	45
a) Language Proficiency			50 %	34 %		
b) Linguistics			16 %	13 %		
c) Literature			14 %	13 %		
2- Subject Teaching Test	20 %	40 %			10	30
Total	100 %	100 %			50	75

Table 1 illustrates the comparisons of the percentages and numbers for the topics in ELT field and subjects between the years of 2013 and 2018 and the new distribution in 2019. The total number of the questions was fifty between the years 2013 and 2018; however, ASPC increased the number of the questions to seventy-five in 2019. Previous six years (2013-2018), the number of subject knowledge test questions was forty (80 %), while in 2019 it was forty-five (60 %). Additionally, the number of the questions in subject teaching test between the years 2013 and 2018 was ten (20 %) while it was thirty (40 %) in 2019.

Table 2 presents the previous (between the years 2013 and 2018) and the new distribution (2019) of questions that pertain to each topic and subject.

Table 2. The Number of the Questions for Each Topic and Subject in SKT with respect to the Years

Topics and Subjects	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Language Proficiency	16	16	16	16	16	16	20
Pedagogic Grammar	9	9	9	9	9	10	5
Linguistics	9	8	8	8	8	7	10
Literature	7	7	7	7	7	7	6
Methodology	1	2	2	2	2	2	9
Teaching Language Skills	1	1	1	2	2	2	12
Material Development	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
Testing	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Teaching English to Young Learners	2	2	2	2	2	1	4
Second Language Acquisition	1	1	2	1	1	2	2
Factors Affecting Language Learning	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Total	50	50	50	50	50	50	75

According to the previous distribution of the topics and subjects in Table 2, the number of the questions was nearly the same in Linguistics, Methodology, Teaching Language Skills, Teaching English to Young Learners, and Factors Affecting Language Learning between the years of 2013 and 2018. However, in the new distribution of the questions, there were salient differences with respect to these topics and subjects. Especially in Teaching Language Skill, there were two questions in the previous SKTs (between the years 2013 and 2018), while there were twelve questions in the new distribution (in the year 2019) of the questions. Furthermore, the number of the questions was only one in Material Development and two in Methodology in the previous SKTs, while it was four in Material Development and nine in Methodology in the new distribution of the topics and subjects. It is also quite clear that there was a halve reduction in the number of the questions for Pedagogic Grammar in which the questions were directed interchangeably with Linguistics.

Previous research on SKT has mainly focused on suggestions on the examination process and the implications of SKT takers with this respect. Kılıçkaya and Krajka (2013) reviewed language teacher selection examination and recruitment in Turkey and Poland and argued that in Turkey a reliable and valid examination should be implemented which measures the subject knowledge of exam takers, and in Poland a recruitment process based on objective criteria should be enacted rather than local prerequisites. Studies conducted on preschool prospective teachers showed the importance of SKT; however, they also reflected that a more comprehensive content should be included in by considering various factors (Recepoglu, et al., 2016; Çelik, 2016; Halmatov & Kızıltas, 2019). In a similar study, Turan and Zengin (2017) reflected that classroom teaching students stated the necessity of SKT for their field. On the other hand, prospective Turkish teachers demonstrated adverse opinions regarding SKT since it contains subjects and topics in general (Şahin & Demir, 2016).

Teachers should have field knowledge of the concepts, phenomena, and the pedagogical field knowledge to perform an effective teaching in their classroom contexts (Erdem & Soylu, 2013). To achieve this goal,

Klassen et al. (2020) propose that SKT is a very significant progressional examination for prospective teachers since it helps them to annihilate some unexpected difficulties they may face later on in their professional lives. Therefore, the selection and recruiting process of these teachers necessitates a reliable and valid examination (Kılıçkaya & Krajka, 2013) for prospective teachers. Taking into consideration this relevance, this study aimed to reflect prospective ELT Teachers' conceptions and suggestions on the new distribution of the subjects and topics in SKT with a systematic investigation that has not been previously investigated in this field.

3 | METHOD

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE AND INSTRUMENTS

Grounded on a survey-based research design, the data were collected to reveal ELT prospective teachers' conceptions on the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT and their further suggestions regarding SKTs that will be implemented for the following years. The data gathering process consisted of two main sections; an online-survey and semi-structured interviews held with ten ELT prospective teachers. In the online survey, the participants reflected their conceptions by stating their agreement or disagreement via a 5-point Likert scale (1= *I strongly agree*, 2= *I agree*, 3= *Neither agree or disagree*, 4= *I disagree* and 5= *I strongly disagree*) (Tullis & Albert, 2013). The quantitative data obtained from the online survey were analyzed via statistical software programme SPSS 22 to reveal descriptive statistics about the participants' conceptions. Additionally, the participants were asked to write their own conceptions without any limitation to choose pre-determined options or alternative answers at the end of the survey (Fowler, 2002). This section and the interview transcripts were translated into English taking care to preserve the intended message of the participants and interviewees' comments. These translations were then checked by two other ELT instructor working at the same institution. Before the administration of the survey, it was piloted with a group of 150 ELT prospective teachers. In consequence of this piloting study, its length, wording, and organization revised in line with their feedback.

The 13 items of " *Specifying the Conceptions and Suggestions of Pre-service EFL Teachers' on the New Distribution of the Topics and Subjects in SKT*" scale was subjected to principal components analysis (PCA) using SPSS. Prior to performing PCA the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of all coefficients are above .3 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Table 3. Factor Analysis of the Sample Suitability for the Distribution of the Items

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO)		.882
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Chi-Square	1659.580
	df	78
	Sig.	.000
Cronbach's Alpha		.822

According to Table 3, the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was .882 which means that the sample size is convenient to conduct factor analysis for items in the survey. Additionally, when considered the results of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($X^2 = 1659.580$; $p < .01$), chi-square result was significant. Lastly, Cronbach's Alpha value was .822 which means that the items in the survey were coefficient reliable.

Table 4. Factor Loadings from PCA with Varimax Rotation for a Three-Factor Solution for SKT scale (N =355)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
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	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.042	38.788	38.788	5.042	38.788	38.788	4.140	31.842	31.842
2	1.191	9.158	47.946	1.191	9.158	47.946	2.014	15.493	47.336
3	1.085	8.346	56.292	1.085	8.346	56.292	1.164	8.956	56.292
4	.984	7.572	63.864						
5	.829	6.378	70.242						
6	.754	5.801	76.042						
7	.706	5.427	81.469						
8	.610	4.692	86.161						
9	.531	4.087	90.248						
10	.387	2.978	93.226						
11	.350	2.696	95.922						
12	.300	2.306	98.228						
13	.230	1.772	100.00						

PCA in Table 4 also revealed the presence of three factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 38.78 per cent, 9.16 per cent, 8.35 per cent of the variance, respectively.

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix (RCM)

Rotated Component Matrix	Component		
	1	2	3
7- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT measures my performance in terms of subject knowledge.	.730		
6- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT measures my performance in terms of English language proficiency.	.712		
5- I am of the opinion that the content of the questions in the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT are related to the topics and subjects in the field of ELT	.659		
8- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT measures my performance of interpretation in English.	.632		
3- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT is in parallel with the subjects I had at my university.	.834		
11- I am of the opinion that the most challenging subject in the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT was -----.	.824		
10- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT was more successful and comprehensive than the previously implemented SKTs.		.792	
1- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in the SKT selects prospective ELT teachers who are competent in their field.		.773	
12- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT met my expectations in terms of a relevant testing.		.750	
9- I am of the opinion that I have received sufficient information from the exam preparation stakeholders about the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT.			.512
4- I am of the opinion that the academicians at my department acknowledged me about the new distribution of topics and subjects in SKT.			.845
13- I am of the opinion that the time given to the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT is sufficient.			.468
2- I am of the opinion that the field education I obtained from my university is sufficient to be successful in SKT.			.612

The Rotated Component Matrix (RCM) in Table 5 revealed that the first factor which seemed to index *content of SKT* corresponded for the first six items; the second factor, which seemed to index *aim of SKT* corresponded for the second third items, and lastly the third factor, which seems to index *external factors that affect exam takers in SKT* corresponded for the last four items.

The second main section of the study involved semi-structured interviews consisting of pre-determined questions which were directed to ten prospective ELT teachers. They participated to the interviews on a voluntary basis. These interviews were held on Adobe-connect application which is a digital platform used for

distance training activities accessible from anywhere, anytime. Before the implementation of the interviews, the participants were informed that they could use their mother tongue to answer the questions in order to convey the intended meaning in a clearer manner; however, the questions were prepared and directed to them in English. Additionally, for the purpose of ensuring the confidentiality and ethical issues, they were also informed that pseudonyms would be used, and the recordings would not be released. The semi-structured research questions directed to the participants were as follows,

- 1- *Were you able to get well-prepared before SKT?*
- 2- *What was the most difficult section of SKT for you?*
- 3- *Was SKT an examination that met your expectations?*

The answers provided by the interviewee were recorded via Adobe-connect, and later these recordings were transcribed into word format to perform the coding process. In the coding process of the responses, two colleagues working in the same institution independently coded and created tally charts for the emerging themes. These emerging themes were then compared and discussed until an agreement was reached on for all the themes.

Arising questions and arguments about whether current approaches in the examination procedures for public positions are efficient and targeted or not in choosing the qualified prospective teachers in Turkish ELT Teacher Training contexts has been the major urge to conduct this study. For this purpose, it will be beneficial to obtain the conceptions and suggestions of ELT prospective teachers as one of the major stakeholders in this paradigm. With this respect, the study addressed the following research questions:

- 1- *What are the conceptions of prospective ELT teachers on the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT?*
- 2- *What are their further suggestions for SKTs which will be implemented in the following years?*

Participants

In the first sub-section the on-line survey (the first main section), the participants were asked about their gender, age, undergraduate programmes, academic achievement grade and attendance to a private teaching institution for the preparation of SKT and previous SKT experience. The participants of this study were 355 senior students who will graduate in the spring term of 2020 and the bachelors who graduated from different English language departments of the universities throughout the country.

Table 6. The Gender and Age Distribution of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender			
Male	87	24.5	24.5
Female	268	75.5	100.0
Total	355	100.0	
Age			
19-25 interval	148	41.7	41.7
26 and above	207	58.3	100.0
Total	355	100.0	

According to the gender of the participants in Table 6.268 (75.5 %) of them were female and 87 (24.5 %) of them were male in this study. Their ages were ranged in two basic groups: between 19 and 25 and above 26. With respect to the results of these groups, 207 (58.3 %) of them were above the age of 26 and 148 (41.7 %) them were between the interval of 19 and 25.

In Turkey, the university students who graduate from English language departments such as Department of English Language and Literature, Department of English Linguistics, Department of English Language and Comparative Literature, Department of Translation Studies, Department of Translation and Interpreting,

Department of American Culture and Literature have a right to take SKT provided that they take pedagogical formation certificate from the education faculties of the universities. These senior students and bachelors also have qualifications to become EFL teachers for the public positions after getting this pedagogical formation certificate from the education faculties (2014, YOK).

Table 7. The Distribution of the Undergraduate Programs of the Participants

Undergraduate programs	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Department of English Language Teaching	181	50.8	50.8
Department of English Language and Literature	154	43.5	94.4
Department of English Linguistics	5	1.4	95.8
Department of Translation and Interpreting	5	1.4	97.2
Department of American Culture and Literature	5	2.8	100.0
Total	355	100.0	

Table 7 illustrates the distribution of the participants with respect to the departments they pursue or graduated before 2019. According to the distribution, 181 (50.8 %) of them were the students of Department of English Language Teaching and 154 (43.5 %) of them were the students of Department of English Literature and Language. The number of the participants apart from the Department of English Language Teaching and Department of English Language and Literature was 15 (5.6 %).

Table 8. Academic Achievement Grades of the Participants

Academic Achievement Grade	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
3,6 – 4 interval	20	5.4	5.4
3,1 – 3,5 interval	114	32.2	37.6
2,6 – 3 interval	155	43.8	81.4
2,1 – 2,5 interval	63	17.8	99.2
2 and lower	3	0.8	100.0
Total	355	100.0	

When considered the participants' academic achievement grades, Table 8 shows that 155 (43.8 %) of them were between the 2.6 - 3, 0 interval and 114 (32.2 %) of them were 3.1 – 3.5 intervals. The 3, 6- 4.0 interval group included 20 (5.4 %) of the participants and 2.1- 2.5 interval group included 63 (17.8 %) of the total participants. Attendance to a private teaching institutions and courses is an alternative way which prospective teachers prefer to prepare themselves for SKT.

Table 9. Attendance to a Private Teaching Institution or Courses for SKT and Previous SKT Experience of the Participants.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Attendance to a private teaching institution for SKT			
YES	85	23.7	23.7
NO	270	76.3	100
Total	355	100	
Previous SKT experience			
YES	222	62.7	62.7
NO	133	37.3	100
Total	355	100	

Table 9 illustrates that the number of the participants who preferred taking SKT courses from a private teaching institutions or courses was 85 (23.7 %), while 270 (76.3 %) did not take or attend to any of the courses from those institutions. On the other hand, the number of the participants who had a previous SKT experience was 222 (62.7 %) and the number of the participants who did not have such an experience was 133 (37.3 %).

The participants, who took part in the semi-structured interviews in second main section of the study, were ten undergraduate students graduated from different English language programs of the universities in Turkey. Their participation process into the interviews was totally on a voluntary basis. Pseudonyms were used in order to provide confidentiality for the interviewees, and they were also ensured that the video-recordings of the interviews would not be released or used at any cost. The participants were informed the fixed time of the interviews on the live distant learning platform beforehand, and each interview was lasted in 20 minutes. The following table illustrates detailed information about the interviews.

Table 10. The Distribution of the Participants in the Interview

Names	Gender	Age	Undergraduate programs	Academic Achievement Grade	Attendance to a private teaching institution for SKT	Previous SKT experience
1- Merve	Female	23	Department of English Language Teaching	2.6-3.0 interval	YES	YES
2- Cemile	Female	22	Department of English Language Teaching	3.6-4.0 interval	YES	NO
3-Havva	Female	24	Department of English Literature and Language	2.6-3.0 interval	NO	YES
4- İbrahim	Male	28	Department of English Language Teaching	2.6-3.0 interval	NO	YES
5- Pelin	Female	25	Department of Translation and Interpreting	2.6-3.0 interval	YES	YES
6- Ayberk	Male	25	Department of Translation Studies	3.1-3.5 interval	YES	NO
7- Hasan	Male	24	Department of American Culture and Literature	3.6-4.0 interval	YES	YES
8- Tülay	Female	28	Department of English Language and Comparative Literature	3.6-4.0 interval	YES	YES
9- Serap	Female	24	Department of English Literature and Language	3.6-4.0 interval	YES	YES
10- Kamil	Male	22	Department of English Literature and Language	3.1-3.5 interval	YES	NO

According to the distribution in Table 10, six of the interviewees were females and four of them were males whose ages range between 22 and 25 except İbrahim and Tülay who were at the age of 28. When considered their undergraduate programs, three of the interviewees graduated from Department of English Language Teaching programs, and three of them graduated from Department of English Language and Literature programs of different universities. Other four interviewees were from the departments of Department of English Language and Comparative Literature, Department of Translation Studies, Department of Translation and Interpreting, Department of American Culture and Literature. Merve, Havva, **İbrahim** and **Pelin's academic achievement grades were between 2.6-3.0 interval**, Ayberk and Kamil's academic grade was between 3.1-3.5 interval and Cemile, Hasan, Tülay and Serap's academic achievement grade was between 3.6-4.0 interval. Lastly, Merve, Havva, **İbrahim, Pelin, Hasan, Tülay and Serap had previous SKT experiences** while Cemile, Ayberk and Kamil did not have any SKT experiences.

4 | FINDINGS

The first three items were related to their conceptions about the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT and in relation to their university education background and programmes.

Table 11. Participants' Conceptions about the New Distribution of the Topics and Subjects in SKT and in Relation to their University Education

Items	1		2		3		4		5	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
<i>1- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT is in parallel with the subjects I had at my university.</i>	28	7.9	87	24.5	28	7.9	144	40.6	68	19.2
<i>2- I am of the opinion that the academicians at my department acknowledged me about the new distribution of topics and subjects in SKT.</i>	24	6.8	64	18.0	37	10.4	141	39.7	89	25.1
<i>3- I am of the opinion that the field education I obtained from my university is sufficient to be successful in SKT.</i>	31	8.7	77	21.7	17	4.8	134	37.7	96	27

As shown in the Table 11, the participants firstly reflected their conceptions whether the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT was in parallel with the topics they had at their faculty programmes. The results indicated that 40.6 % (144) of the participants reported their disagreement as regards to the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT was not in parallel with the topics and subjects they had at their faculty programmes. On the other hand, 24.5 % (87) of them agreed that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT was in parallel with the topics they had at their universities. In the second item, 39.7 % (141) of the participants remarked that the academicians at their departments did not acknowledge them about the new distribution of the topics and subjects. As for the last item in this sub-section, 37.7 % (134) of the participants were of the opinion that the field education they obtained from their faculties was not sufficient for them to be successful in SKT.

In the second section, the participants were expected to respond the items related to the aim and the content of the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT.

Table 12. Participants' Conceptions on the Aim and Content of the New Distribution of the Topics and Subjects in SKT

Items	1		2		3		4		5	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	%	f	%	f
1- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT selects prospective ELT teachers who are competent in their field.	14	3.9	67	22.8	25	29.9	140	69.3	109	30.7
2- I am of the opinion that the content of the questions in the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT are related to the topics and subjects in the field of ELT.	23	6.5	116	32.7	38	10.7	120	33.8	58	16.3
3- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT was more successful and comprehensive than the previously implemented SKTs.	19	5.4	36	10.1	44	12.4	116	32.7	140	39.4
4- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT measures my performance of interpretation in English.	36	10.1	108	30.4	38	10.7	111	31.3	62	17.5
5- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT measures my performance in terms of English language proficiency.	25	7.0	83	23.4	45	12.7	116	32.7	86	24.2
6- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT measures my performance in terms of subject knowledge.	19	5.4	104	29.3	36	10.1	122	34.4	74	20.8
7- I am of the opinion that the most challenging subject in the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT was -----.	244	68.7	21	5.9	16	4.5	56	15.8	18	5.1
8- I am of the opinion that I have received sufficient information from the exam preparation stakeholders about the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT.	18	5.1	57	16.1	28	7.9	103	29.0	149	42.0
9- I am of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT met my expectations in terms of a relevant testing.	9	2.5	32	9.0	40	11.3	134	37.7	140	39.4
10- I am of the opinion that the time given to the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT is sufficient.	22	6.2	99	27.9	31	8.7	81	22.8	122	34.4

The second section involved ten items related to the aim and the content of the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT. Table 12 illustrates that in the first item, 69.3 % (140) of the participants were of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT did not select prospective ELT teachers who were competent in their field with regards to its purpose. In the second item, 33.8 % (120) of the participants reflected their dissatisfaction with the unrelatedness between the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT and the topics and subjects in the field of ELT. Considering the third item, 39.4 % (140) of the participants expressed that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT was not more successful and comprehensive than the previously implemented SKTs. As for the fourth item, there was

nearly an equivalence with respect to the results; namely, 30.4 % (108) of the participants were of the opinion that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT measured their performance of interpretation in English, whereas 31.3 % (111) of them expressed their disagreement in this regard. The fifth and sixth items showed that (32.7 %) (116) of the participants remarked the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT did not measure their performance in terms of English language proficiency and for 34.4 % (122) of them subject knowledge in ELT. The seventh item was directed to the participants to reveal the most challenging topic or subject for them [1= *Language Proficiency* (68.7 %), 2= *Subject Teaching* (15.8 %), 3= *Linguistics* (5.9 %), 4= *Pedagogic Grammar* (5.1 %), 5= *Literature* (4.5 %)] as regards to the new distribution of the topics and subjects. Accordingly, 68.7 % of the participants (244) stated that “Language Proficiency” was the most challenging subject in this distribution. In the eighth item, 42.0 % (149) of the participants viewed that they were not sufficiently informed about the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT before the implementation process. According to the ninth item, 39.4 % (140) of the participants totally disagreed upon the idea that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT met their expectations in terms of a relevant testing. In the last item, the time given to the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT was not sufficient for 34.4 % of the participants.

Borg (2009) argues that questionnaires do not reflect an-in-depth understanding of the participants’ beliefs and views; hence it is highly advisable and appropriate to support the questionnaire with qualitative data. Hence, we also supported our quantitative data with the third section of the survey and the interviews held with 10 ELT prospective teachers. In this section, the participants reflected their conceptions on the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT without any prescribed questions and forms. In addition, they provided suggestions for future SKTs which will be administered in the following years.

- (1) *Before we took SKT, a booklet or something that informed us about the new distribution of the topics and subjects. Nobody was expecting five paragraph questions, because we were not taking university entrance examination. The number of subject knowledge questions should have been increased instead of these paragraph questions.*

In the first excerpt of this section, he/she claimed that a booklet should have been published and released which informed the new distribution of the topics and subjects of SKT. He/she also complained about the increased number of the paragraph questions and proposed increasing the number of the subject knowledge questions.

- (2) *I felt as if I had taken university the university entrance examination. That was the biggest disappointment for me. I wish they had asked questions from all topics and subjects in ELT in equal numbers instead of asking language performance questions.*

In the given second excerpt, he/she expressed the disappointment about the content of the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT. He/she argued that he/she felt himself/herself as if he/she entered university entrance examination again in which only the language proficiencies of the students are measured at the end of high school. He/she also stated that the old distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT was better than recent distribution in terms of measuring all subject and topics equally.

- (3) *I think this new form of SKT does not measure our subject knowledge. Because there were too many paragraph questions. I recommend them to measure our subject knowledge constituting of approaches, methods, and techniques instead.*

In the third excerpt, he/she argued that the changing format of SKT was far from measuring the subject knowledge of the exam takers since it was full of language proficiency questions such as the paragraph questions. He/she also proposed that they should put into practice an examination which centers upon measuring the techniques and approaches used in this field.

- (4) *It would be far better if there were questions in all types. Five paragraph questions that were asked successively prevented us to read and answer the following questions clearly.*

In the fourth excerpt, He/she claimed about the five paragraph questions in the new distribution of the topics and subjects of SKT that these paragraph questions confused their minds and prevented them to read the other questions in an open-minded way.

- (5) *Cloze test questions were unexpected questions in SKT. Additionally, asking five paragraph questions was nonsense for me. There were also some concepts and terms which I have never heard before and they were very challenging for me.*

In this excerpt (5), He/she mentioned that the cloze test questions were unexpected in the new distribution of the topic and subjects in SKT. He/she complained that there were notions and concepts which he/she did not experience or encounter before the examination. Furthermore, these notions and concepts were compelling to explain him/her.

- (6) *It was such an examination that as if it were prepared in the last minute. You cannot measure one's competence or performance only by directing paragraph questions.*

In the sixth excerpt, He/she stated that the questions in the new distribution of the topics and subjects of SKT were as if prepared before day of the administration process. Hence, he/she stated his/her disagreement in measuring the competence of prospective teachers via paragraph questions.

- (7) *Paragraph questions should have been diversified and the duration of the exam should have been extended.*

As opposes to previous excerpt, in this excerpt (7) he/she proposed that the paragraph questions might be diversified and the duration of SKT might also be prolonged accordingly.

- (8) *The time allocated to the examination was not sufficient. Proficiency section should not have contained only paragraph questions. It was shocking for me to face different types of questions and the nonsense distribution of these questions.*

In the last excerpt of the third section, he/she explicated the insufficiency of the time allocated to SKT and complained about language proficiency section which was mainly constituted of paragraph questions. It was also shocking for him/her to see the different question types and the malarkey of the topics and subjects.

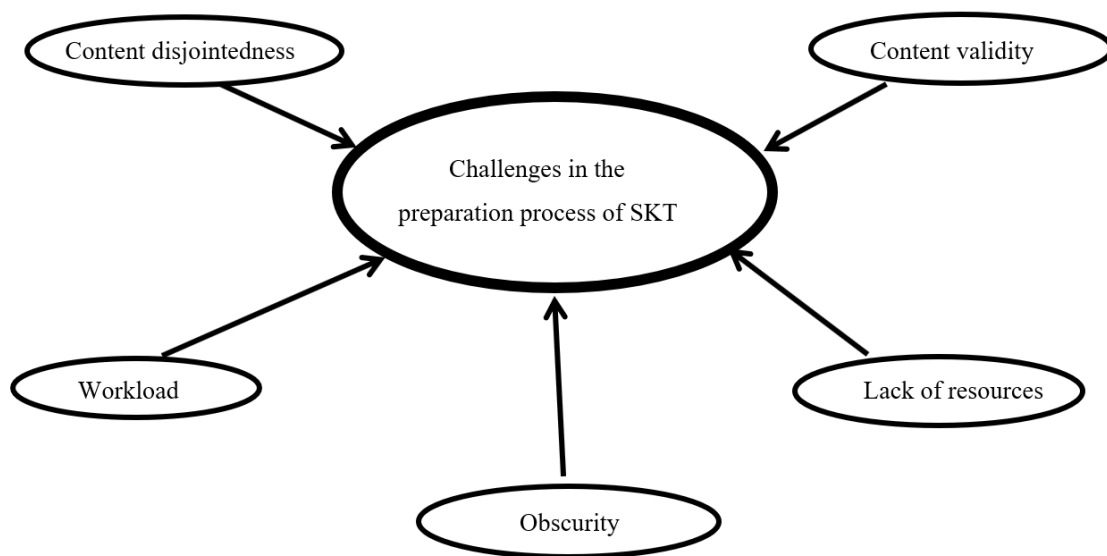
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The semi-structured interviews were structured on the basis of interview questions. In the analysis process, their responses were discussed with respect to the emerging themes under each research question and sample excerpts were provided related to these emerging themes. To increase the degree of inter-rater reliability, two researchers working at the same institution were asked to identify themes in the transcriptions of the interview. The results indicated that close agreement were provided for the merging themes.

Question 1: Were you able to get well-prepared before SKT? Why-Why not?

Data analysis highlighted several factors that influence the preparation process of SKT exam takers. The interviewees' answers in this question fell into five main themes as were found through their responses in the transcriptions of the interviews.

Figure 1. Themes emerging from the first interview question.



When asked the first question of the interview to the interviewees, they all responded that they could not get well-prepared before the exam. As for the first reason, although they attended a special course for SKT, the content disjointedness between their faculties and SKT discouraged them to put into practice an effective preparation strategy for the examination.

- (1) *The most challenging part of SKT is the discrepancy between the topics and subject in SKT and the courses we took at our faculties. For example, when I had decided to study SKT, I had difficulty in starting from a topic because of my anxiety and stress.*

Cemile remarked in the given excerpt (1) that the content disjointedness between her faculty curriculum and the content of SKT caused anxiety for her in the preparation process of SKT. She also stressed that the topics and subjects she had to study were much dispersed.

- (2) *It was an examination with an invalid content. There were few questions of pedagogic grammar. Additionally, there were not questions of translation, dialogue, irrelevant sentence. It was full of disappointment and negatively surprising. I wish I had not studied subject knowledge topics. I am so worried since had studied a lot to those topics since I forgot them. I wish I had also studied paragraph questions more.*

In the given excerpt (2), Tülay stressed that it was an invalid examination due to its content validity. For her, it was a total disappointment since SKT contained few questions on pedagogic grammar; furthermore, there were not any questions on translation, dialogue, questions that break coherence and paragraph completion. She expressed that the new distribution of the topics and subject in SKT was completely surprising and disappointing for her. Lastly, she was also disappointed since she studied the topics related to subject field instead of studying paragraph question in language proficiency.

The interviewees expressed their workload during the preparation process of SKT. They all claimed that the congestion of the topics and subjects at their faculties and the subjects and topics they had to study in SKT put a heavy burden on them.

- (3) *When I tried to start to study SKT, I was locked up between the topics and subjects of SKT and my courses at the faculty. Because while you were trying to make a study plan, there was always something unexpected such as a project work, homework or a project of internship. Because of this workload on me prevented me to allocate time to study SKT efficiently.*

As mentioned in the given excerpt (3), Havva commented on the hardships in planning and organizing an effective study program; hence, this case prevented them to actualize a fruitful preparation process for

SKT. She also lamented that she had problems in organizing a simultaneous study program between SKT preparation and their faculty programs.

- (4) *I have been taking this examination for two years. At the same time, I am working at a private school in order not to be a burden on my family and to linger on my life. We all know the private institutions in our country. They force us to work long hours like a slave by paying dribble salaries. You see, it is very difficult and heavy burden for me to study for SKT and work at a private school at the same time.*

Pelin in this excerpt (4) complained about her workload due to his working conditions in relation to the preparation process of SKT. She mentioned that she had been working like a slave at a private school in exchange for a minimum salary for two years in order not to be a burden on his family and to lead her own life. She argued that it was very difficult and heavy for her to study for SKT and to work at a private school as well.

The obscurity in their exam system and induction process depending on this examination system was mentioned by the interviewees.

- (5) *The examination system of our country is constantly changing in every field and unfortunately these changes are made without informing the students who take those exams. There is a constant uncertainty about this. In addition, this uncertainty appears not only in the examination system, but also in the appointment process. "Will there be an appointment this year? If so, how many appointments will we have in our branch?" These questions always occupy our mind.*

Kamil stated in the given excerpt (5) that the national examination system was constantly changing in every field, and unfortunately these changes were made without informing the exam takers before the essential time interval that the exam takers need to study. He also added that this obscurity appeared in not only the examination system, but also in the induction process in which the arising questions whether there would be induction or how many teachers would be assigned the following year were always sought answers by prospective teachers.

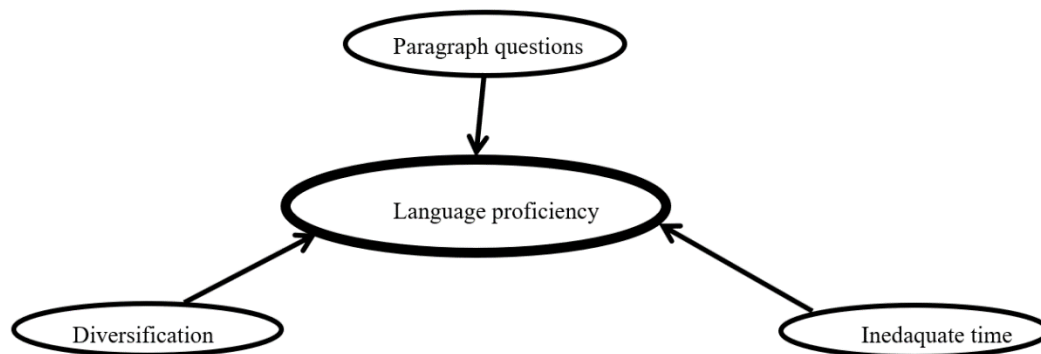
- (6) *It was so cruel that a five-year-long exam was completely replaced without informing us, and we learned about it a little while ago. This leaves not only us, but also the publishing houses that help us to prepare for this exam in a difficult situation. For example, if you look for a resource or a test book that you will study according to this new exam system currently, you cannot find it. Why? Hopp !! The content of SKT was changed. So these are the main problems that have to be considered on.*

Hasan claimed in this excerpt (6) that it was very cruel for them to change the content of SKT that was administered for five years without any reason and to learn this in a jiffy. He interpolated that this case not only affected the exam takers but also test-book publishers from whom the exam takers benefit in the preparation process of SKT.

Question 2: What was the most difficult section of SKT for you?

All the interviewees stated that the most difficult section of SKT was language proficiency section for them.

Figure 2. Themes emerging from the second interview question



When asked the underlying reason for their arguments, Ayberk expressed that the number of the proficiency questions was higher than he expected; therefore, he was not able to get around finishing them in time. Additionally, Havva indicated her extemporaneity for the language proficiency questions since subject knowledge test topics engrossed her preparation process for SKT.

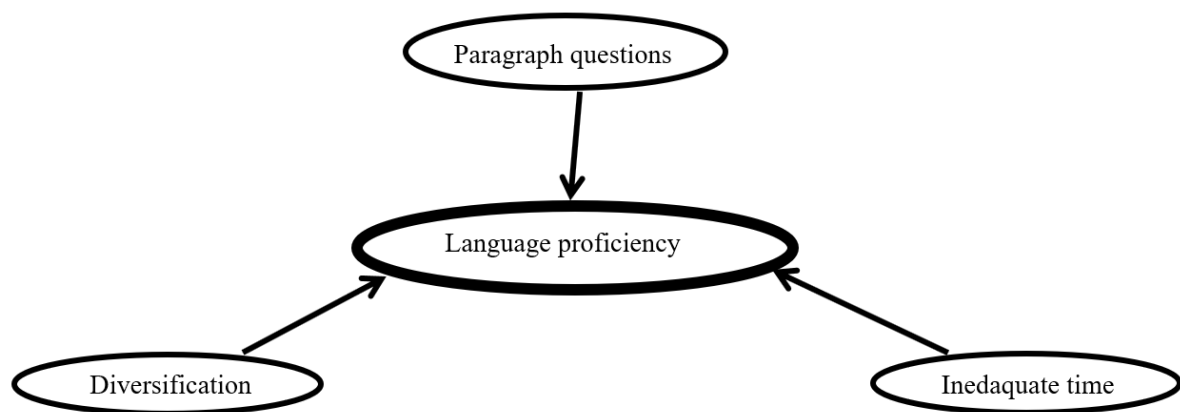
- (1) *ASPC should have informed us about the paragraph questions beforehand.*
- (2) *The types of paragraph questions should be diversified, or the time allocated to these paragraph questions should be extended.*
- (3) *Paragraph questions are high in number. Pedagogic grammar questions should be directed instead.*
- (4) *For me, the number of the paragraph questions are outnumbering, furthermore I think that they do not measure our grammatical performance.*

The given excerpts of the interviewees (1-4) mainly centred upon the paragraph questions in language proficiency section. They mentioned that ASPC should give information about the additional inclusion in the number of these paragraph questions. Furthermore, they argued that the time allocated for the examination should have been extended and the types of these paragraph questions should have been diversified to measure also their grammatical knowledge.

Question 3- Was it an examination that met your expectations?

All the interviewees stated that SKT did not meet their expectations in terms of selecting ELT prospective teachers who were proficient and competent in their fields.

Figure 3. Themes emerging from the third interview question.



- (1) *The examination was not an examination that would measure what and to what extent we know about our subject field. The distribution of the topics and subjects was terrible. Hence, I am of the opinion that there should be an equal distribution in the numbers of questions with respect to the topics and subjects.*

Serap stated in the given excerpt (1) that it was not a test which measured their subject knowledge. In that, the distribution of the questions with respect to the topics and subjects was poor for her; hence she recommended an equal distribution in the numbers of the questions with regards to the topics and subjects for SKTs that would be held in the following years.

- (2) *We already respond questions related to pedagogic topics in SKT. Therefore, it is nonsense for me to take those questions in educational sciences section. To me, it will be better and beneficial for us an increase in the number of questions related to the topics of approaches and methods.*

Merve pointed in this excerpt (2) that they responded questions related to pedagogic topics therefore it was nonsense for her to be responsible for the educational sciences in the afternoon section of CEEPP. This problem, for her, might be obviated by increasing the number of the questions in the methodology and

approaches topics and subjects of SKT, and abrogating educational sciences in the afternoon section of CEEPP for ELT prospective teachers.

- (3) *I will graduate at the end of this semester. I tried to answer the questions of SKT held in 2019; however, I encountered with some topics and subjects which I have never seen throughout my discipleship at the university. This examination is far from measuring our knowledge and performance in our subject-field.*

In this excerpt (3), Ayberk mentioned that he downloaded the questions of the recent SKT (2019) and tried to answer them. However, there were questions from the topics which he had never seen before. He claimed that it was very difficult for him to finish all these topics and subjects in time. Fundamentally, he stressed upon the poorness of the new distribution of the topics and subjects in measuring their competencies and performances.

- (4) *I do not really understand the mentality in directing cloze test questions to SKT exam takers. If you want to do something you should also implement a psychology test to SKT exam takers. Additionally, an examination based on measuring our four basic skills in EFL, such as IELTS or TOEFL, should be administered if we will be inducted as English teachers.*

Lastly, İbrahim in this excerpt (4) remarked the whimsicality of asking cloze tests to ELT students. For him, all prospective teachers should be given a Psychological test before inducting them. In addition to that, SKT should be implemented as an examination that was based on measuring their competence and performance with respect to four basic skills as was in IELTS or TOEFL (He directed his ideas to the stakeholders; ASPC and MoNE).

5 | DISCUSSION

This study attempted to annunciate the perceptions and suggestions of the prospective ELT teachers related to the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT since this examination plays a crucial role for their future lives. From 2013, the average number of ELT prospective teachers who take SKT each year is 20.000, and an average number between 1500 and 3000 of these ELT prospective teachers are inducted to the public schools throughout the country. In teacher training programmes, recruitment of prospective teachers is regarded as a kernel issue (Ronfeldt, 2015). Hence, for their employability in the public positions, the success in SKT for the exam takers not only depends on themselves and their preparation process, but also the other factors related to the examination system which measure their subject knowledge and language proficiency.

There are at least five different undergraduate programs at the universities which provide ELT education for their graduates. The differences and inconsistencies between the curricula of these different undergraduate programs and the topics and subjects in SKT pose a major problem for ELT prospective teachers. In addition to this situation, ELT prospective teachers are not supported and informed sufficiently about SKT and its content by their instructors or academic members of their faculties (Şimşek & Akgün, 2014; Karaer¹et al., 2018). It is an undeniable fact that university education on the subject and field knowledge is very important for prospective teachers. The ELT prospective teachers, especially graduating from the undergraduate programs apart from Department of English Language Teaching as illustrated in Table 7 (the demographic distribution of the programmes) face a number of challenges mainly stemming from absences of the pedagogic topics and subjects in their educational sciences. Although they try to close this gap by attending to the private education institutions which provide SKT courses, this compensation for these topics and subjects for the preparation process do not suffice for them. Another significant result emerged from the survey that the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT does not select prospective ELT teachers who are competent in their fields with regards to its purpose. A possible explanation for this might stem from the fact that the content of the questions in the new distribution of the topics and subjects in SKT are scant as they do not correspond to the topics and subjects in these fields as was in ELT.

When compared the distribution of the topics and subjects in the previous SKTs to the new distribution of the topics and subjects in the recent SKT, the disapprobation of ELT prospective teachers mainly centred upon language proficiency questions; for why the most challenging topic in the recent SKT was language proficiency section for the majority of ELT prospective teachers. This may have resulted from the fact that they did not have an expectation for the increase in the number of these types of questions. This uncertainty and caliginosity of the selection and testing procedures in Turkey have always engendered hardships for the exam takers. Hence the wash-back effect of these examinations has always been negative for the prospective teachers. This case was also valid for the test takers of CEEPP implemented for other public positions (Sönmez & Atav, 2013; Erdem & Soylu, 2013). Although recent literature revealed that there should be a valid and reliable examination in the selection and induction process of prospective teachers, the content of the new distribution of the topics and subjects in the recent SKT was not satisfactory for ELT prospective teachers in selecting the qualified teachers in their fields. Lastly, the time allocated to these type examinations does not suffice for the examinees to complete the test in time. Therefore, the timing procedure in such tests should be well-calculated since the examinees are also work against the time.

The interviews held with ten ELT prospective teachers revealed integral results with those of the survey results; in that content disjointedness, content validity, workload, lack of resources and obscurity were the emerging problems related to the new distribution of the topics and subject in SKT. The interviewees' major focus was centred upon what they obtained from their faculties and what they were tested for the induction. This content disjointedness between their faculty programmes and the examination procedure of ASPC also brings the problem validity in SKT. Additionally, resulting from the obscurity in the examination and induction process, the SKT exam takers are not able to plan their future careers since there are two ways for being an ELT teacher in Turkey; whether you have to study SKT until the induction in a public school or work at private institutions or schools. The prospective teachers who prefer working in these private institutions or schools face with laborious working conditions such as long working hours in exchange for insufficient salaries. Another problem resulting from the obscurity is that the shortage of the resources that they benefit from in the preparation process of SKT. The test-book publishers are not able to catch up with these constant changes in these kinds of examinations; as a result, there is always neediness of exam preparation books and test-books that are major sources that contain pending topics and subjects with regards to the topics and subjects.

6 | CONCLUSION

Pre-service teachers initial aim is to be inducted after completing their programmes; however, their quality and ability is not always at desired levels based on the criteria of their educational policies (Chevalier et al, 2005). Therefore, the main goal of SKT should select prospective teachers who have essential knowledge and concepts in their fields and implement these essential knowledge and concepts in an effective way into the classroom setting (Ingvarson et al., 2004). The new distribution of the topics and subject in the new SKT falls short in actualizing this goal. Taking into consideration this ineffectiveness of the recent SKT, a number of suggestions might be proposed to put into action a more comprehensive ELT prospective teacher selection and induction process.

Firstly, it is an undeniable fact that there is disjointedness among the stakeholders (MoNE, ASPC and Faculties of the Universities and State Personnel Administration) in this selection procedure of prospective teachers. This lack of cooperation among the stakeholders has always engendered problems. MoNE and Universities and State Personnel Administration should organize and put into action at least five year plan for a persistent induction regulation; thereby the students who will attend the education faculties should know beforehand the number of the vacant positions in the induction process in their fields. Secondly, a consistent and coherent testing procedure should be prepared and implemented under the cooperation of the education faculties and ASPC for all undergraduate programs. Furthermore, the topics and subjects in this testing procedure should be announced to SKT takers beforehand, in this way they will be cognizant of what to study and how much time to spend for this preparation process.

The last suggestion for the selection process of ELT prospective teachers is related to rendering the theoretical knowledge into practice. Hence the selection process should not only be limited to measure prospective teachers' knowledge and concepts which are basic essentials in their subject field but also the practicum process they participate in their senior years should be taken into consideration in this paradigm. However, the existing drawbacks and problems emerging from both internal and external factors confine to pursue a fructiferous practicum processes administered by MoNE and education faculties. Hereby, the stakeholders especially, MoNE and the deaneries at the universities should follow a consolidated and explicit practicum plan. This plan should include some significant items such as preparing a curriculum, contriving detailed evaluation criteria and educating highly qualified mentor teachers who will assist ELT prospective teachers. With this respect a further research might be conducted which investigates whether the practicum should be taken into consideration as a measurement and evaluation criterion in the selection and induction process of ELT prospective teachers and whether a skill based SKT as is in IELTS and TOEFL would be beneficial in choosing qualified ELT prospective teachers.

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